

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009

DSS Weatherization Plan

Testimony of Deborah Monahan, Executive Director, TVCCA

Good afternoon Committee Chairs and ladies and gentlemen of the Appropriations, Energy and Technology and Human Services Committees. My name is Deborah Monahan. I am the Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, the community action agency serving New London County.

I am here today to speak about the Weatherization Plan put forth by DSS around the utilization of the ARRA Stimulus bill dollars.

During these challenging economic times it is important that local communities work together to address the issues facing our residents. President Obama and Congress in signing and passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have made it clear that they want local businesses, local vendors and local communities strengthened by these funds and economic recovery to begin now.

Under the Weatherization initiatives funded by the ARRA, Congress and the President recognized that many low income families are faced with high energy bills because their dwellings are old and not energy efficient. The massive amount of money in weatherization sought to alleviate these high

bills by weatherizing homes while stimulating local economies and reducing our overall dependence on foreign oil.

In order to accomplish this Connecticut has put forth a plan to weatherize a minimum of 7647 units, while developing a “green workforce”, retaining and creating jobs across the state. It will require coordination and collaboration by many entities. Connecticut and the Department of Social Services should be applauded for their vision in using these dollars to strategically make Connecticut more energy efficient.

TVCCA has been serving Southeastern Connecticut for over 44 years. We are highly accountable to the federal government, the state government, local governments and to our constituents. We have had direct contracts and positive working relationships with DSS for many years.

We are requesting that the Department of Social Services designate TVCCA a “temporary subgrantee” with direct funding for these ARRA weatherization dollars. TVCCA will provide an additional capacity for DSS in Southeastern Connecticut to weatherize low income homes at the local level with local vendors, business and a local workforce.

TVCCA is a community action agency that has experience in operating an effective weatherization. We have assisted low income individuals and families in Southeastern Connecticut for 44 years. We are in compliance with all legal and financial requirements and regulations under state and federal law. Our most recent audit and financial statements and a complete listing of our Board of Trustees are on file with DSS.

We are responsive to the needs of our community, most recently assuming the operation of a child day care in Groton when the YMCA of Southeastern Ct. closed. In less than 30 days working with the town, building inspector, fire marshal, local public health and State Dept. of Public Health we got a new license issued to TVCCA. Services to families were not disrupted.

We work with our communities and for our communities.

Our staff have developed and operated weatherization programs, have extensive construction skills, lead abatement expertise and the technical skills necessary to oversee an effective and efficient weatherization program. Most importantly we are connected to our communities. Following all regulations, we will utilize local businesses and vendors to carry out this program.

We are the One Stop Operator for Eastern Connecticut. Partnering with the Workforce Investment Board and Three Rivers Community College we currently provide educational and training opportunities to low skilled workers.

President Obama in his inaugural address stated..." The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, ...not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth...The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our Gross Domestic Product, but on the reach of our prosperity, on our ability to extend opportunity to every

willing heart, not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.”

TVCCA is requesting designation as a “temporary subgrantee” by direct contract for these ARRA weatherization dollars. It affords New London County opportunities, builds capacity and creates and retains local jobs.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with our local legislators and other partners in making sure each and every eligible home in Southeastern CT receives this important service so that their precious heating dollars are not wasted because of energy inefficient homes.